

Australian Antarctic Salutes Era of the Husky



On September 9 the Australian Antarctic Territory marked the “Era of the Husky” with a set of four stamps in se-tenant pairs.

The term husky commonly refers to snow or northern hemisphere dogs, and can include a wide range of breeds, such as the Siberian Husky, Alaskan Malamute, Samoyed and many more. The thick, double-layered coats of these dogs protect them against extreme conditions. These powerful dogs can haul between 110 and 200 pounds, and the number of dogs in a team is determined by the weight of the load to be hauled.

Huskies were first used in Antarctica by the British Antarctic Expedition in 1898–1900. Little more than a decade later, Douglas Mawson used huskies during his 1911–14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition. In 1954, when Australia established its first permanent Antarctic station at Mawson, huskies were introduced to the Australian territory. These dogs had been bred from Greenland and Labrador huskies that had been left temporarily at Melbourne Zoo in 1948 by a French expedition unable to reach Antarctica due to extreme pack ice. It was agreed that any dogs bred from those left at the zoo would become Australian property, and so these became the first of the Australian Antarctic huskies.

The 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty banned all introduced species, except humans, from Antarctica. In 1993, the last remaining huskies left the Australian Antarctic Territory. The older dogs lived out their days in Australia; the younger dogs went to a new life in Minnesota, USA.

The stamps are presented as se-tenant pairs. The portrait stamps show dogs at rest; the landscape designs show huskies working in teams in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

The new stamp issue comprises two domestic base-rate (Australia 70c) stamps and two large-letter-rate (A\$1.40) stamps. The associated products are a miniature sheet, first day covers, stamp pack, maxicard set of four, and booklet of 10 x 70c self-adhesive stamps. Of particular interest to collectors is the miniature sheet, which has a se-tenant configuration of stamps.

The Australian Antarctic Territory stamp issue is available from September 9, 2014 at www.auspost.com.au/stamps or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) on 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.